

TRIBUTE TO RAY WOLFE

HON. JOHN SHIMKUS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today to honor Ray Wolfe of Edwardsville, IL. Ray is a veteran of World War II, whose army unit liberated the notorious Buchenwald death camp in Germany.

Ray is speaking out about the Holocaust. He has been interviewed by many as a witness to the Holocaust and its horrific events. Ray was invited back to Germany five years ago for the 50th anniversary of the Buchenwald liberation.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Ray for his service to his country. His willingness to bring light to the Holocaust and to teach us about its horrors makes us eternally grateful.

SALUTING THE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE: CELEBRATING 75 YEARS OF LOCAL COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS

HON. JAMES E. ROGAN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. ROGAN. Mr. Speaker, one of the most important and active centers for the arts in Southern California is the Pasadena Playhouse. Later this month, this distinguished theatre company will celebrate its 75th anniversary. In recognition of this achievement, and in gratitude for the center's contributions to the arts in Pasadena, Los Angeles County, and to the state of California, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the Pasadena Playhouse.

The Pasadena Playhouse began as nothing but a dream. After a group of dedicated Pasadena area residents united to promote the arts, the center opened its doors in May 1925. Since then, it has grown from a small community theater company into a national arts leader, taking musicals, dramas and other stage performances from concept planning to opening day.

In the years since its opening, the Pasadena Playhouse has revolutionized theater arts in Southern California. To many in the industry, the playhouse has put Southern California stage productions on the map. Numerous productions have moved on from Pasadena to Broadway, were made into feature films or continued on as national touring shows. In 1996, the production, *Sisterella* broke local house records receiving eight NAACP Theatre Awards, including Best Play. This is just one of the many successful shows to open in Pasadena every year.

In addition, the theatre has become the center of a large community-based arts program. The Pasadena Playhouse is home to a half-dozen original plays each year, with 300 annual performances. The artists who produce, write, direct and star in these plays have also played a vital role in the community, leading lecture series, arts programs, classes and open houses for residents young and old.

On the occasion of its 75th anniversary, the theatre has been recognized as the state the-

atre of California. To help the city and the state commemorate this significant occasion, I ask my colleagues to join me in saluting the men and women who have brought the arts to our community for nearly a century, and helped to put Pasadena and Southern California on the map in the theatre world: Congratulations to the Pasadena Playhouse for 75 successful years.

REMEMBERING JAMES BYRD JUNIOR

HON. SHEILA JACKSON-LEE

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today I express my grief and shame that after 2 years from the date of James Byrd Junior's vicious murder on a paved road in Jasper County, TX, that the Bipartisan Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 1999 has not become law.

Only recently have men been indicted to face trial in the nearly 40-year-old murders of three African-American children who were killed one Sunday morning by a bomb while they participated in services at the 16th Street Baptist Church. This terrible act galvanized the civil rights movement and began a shout for justice, which may at last be answered in a court of law as two Ku Klux Klansmen in Alabama's Jefferson County are finally being brought to justice for the 1963 bombing.

As the years passed from the time of the bombing, it was felt that America had made great strides until the night of June 7, 1998 when this Nation's deepest sin was revealed by the murder of James Byrd Jr.

There is no case, which more graphically reminds this Nation that the submerged intolerance caused by racism that the steeps throughout the fabric of our society can erupt into gangrenous crimes of hate violence like the murder of James Byrd in Jasper, TX.

We mark the second anniversary of his killing today with 1-minute speeches so that we can impress upon our fellow Members of the House the importance of passing strengthened hate crimes legislation.

The lynching of James Byrd struck at the consciousness of our Nation, but we have let complacency take the place of unity in the face of unspeakable evil. It was difficult to imagine how in this day and age that two white supremacists beat Byrd senseless, chained him by the ankles to a pickup truck and then dragged him to his death over 3 miles of country back roads.

I regret to inform this body that the Chief Executive of Texas did not attend Mr. Byrd's funeral and was active in opposing the passage of stronger hate crime legislation for the State of Texas. This level of passivity on the part of leadership in response to this terrible crime has left this Nation without the critical leadership it needs to face the truth regarding hate crime in American society.

Since James Byrd Jr.'s death our Nation has experienced an alarming increase in hate violence directed at men, women and even children of all races, creeds and colors.

Ronald Taylor traveled to the eastside of Pittsburgh, in what has been characterized, as an act of hate violence to kill three and wound two in a fast food restaurant. Eight weeks

later, in Pittsburgh, Richard Baumhammers, armed with a .357-caliber pistol, traveled 20 miles across the west side of Pittsburgh which now leaves him charged with killing five. His shooting victims included a Jewish woman, an Indian, "Vietnamese," Chinese, and several black men.

The decade of the 1990's saw an unprecedented rise in the number of hate groups preaching violence and intolerance, with more than 50,000 hate crimes reported during the years 1991 through 1997. The summer of 1999 was dubbed "The Summer of Hate" as each month brought forth another appalling incident, commencing with a 3-day shooting spree aimed at minorities in the Midwest and culminating with an attack on mere children in California. From 1995 through 1999, there has been 206 different arson or bomb attacks on churches and synagogues throughout the United States—an average of one house of worship attacked every week.

Like the rest of the nation, some in Congress have been tempted to dismiss these atrocities as the anomalous acts of lunatics, but news accounts of this homicidal fringe are merely the tip of the iceberg. The beliefs they act on are held by a far larger, though less visible, segment of our society. These atrocities, like the wave of church burnings across the South, illustrate the need for continued vigilance and the passage of the Hate Crimes Prevention Act.

This legislation will make it easier for Federal authorities to assist in the prosecution of racial, religious and ethnic violence, in the same way that the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996 helped Federal prosecutors combat church arson: By loosening the unduly rigid jurisdictional requirements under federal law. Current law (18 U.S.C.A. 245) only covers a situation where the victim is engaging in certain specified federally protected activities. The legislation will also help plug loopholes in State criminal law, as 10 States have no hate crime laws on the books, and another 21 States fail to specify sexual orientation as a category for protection. This legislation currently has 191 cosponsors, but has had no legislative activity in this House.

It is long past time that Congress passed a comprehensive law banning such atrocities. It is a Federal crime to hijack an automobile or to possess cocaine, and it ought to be a Federal crime to drag a man to death because of his race or to hang a person because of his or her sexual orientation. These are crimes that shock and shame our national conscience and they should be subject to Federal law enforcement assistance and prosecution.

Therefore, I would urge fellow members of the United States House of Representatives to be counted among those who will stand for justice in this country for all Americans and nothing else.

TRIBUTE TO MARY ANN BARTUSCH AND ROSEANN PALLADINO, LONGTIME CHICAGO EDUCATORS

HON. WILLIAM O. LIPINSKI

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, June 7, 2000

Mr. LIPINSKI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to pay tribute to two longtime educators who are retiring